

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 2, 4-9, 12-16, 18-21, and 24-27 are amended, and claims 1 and 10 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter therein. Claims 4 and 12, which were indicated to be allowable by the Office Action, have been rewritten in independent form. Claims 2, 5-9, and 24 have been amended to depend from claim 4, and claim 14 has been amended to depend from claim 12. Finally, claims 20 and 21 have been amended to include the limitations of claims 4 and 12 that were indicated to provide novelty over the prior art of record. No new matter has been added. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 2, 4-9, 12-16, 18-21, and 24-27 will remain pending in the patent application. Reconsideration and allowance of the present patent application based on the foregoing amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4-10, 12-16, 18-21, and 24-27 were objected to because of informalities noted in the Office Action. Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Claims 1 and 10 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering moot the objection and the rejection of these claims. Claims 2, 4-9, 12-16, 18-21, and 24-27 have been amended in the manner suggested by the Office Action. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claims 2, 4-9, 12-16, 18-21, and 24-27 are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 6-8, 10, 16, 19-21, and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) based on Miller *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,421,707) (hereinafter "Miller"). Claims 9, 14, 18, and 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Miller in view of Ardalan *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,396,839) (hereinafter "Ardalan"). Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Miller in view of Ardalan and further in view of Van Renesse *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,208,651) (hereinafter "Van Renesse").

Claims 1 and 10 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering moot the rejection of claims 1 and 10. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to claims 4, 12, 20 and 21, and their dependent claims, all now include allowable subject matter. Accordingly, allowance of the rejected claims is respectfully requested.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. If any point remains in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved

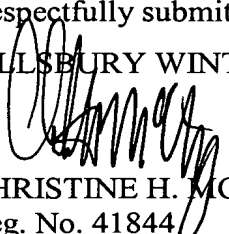
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Client/Matter: 060258-0275251

through a personal or telephone interview, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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